

Service for Learning and Life and Every Student a Graduate



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Friendships, Grades Rise when Students Bake and Break Bread Together

AmeriCorps Member Jake Larsh tutors at Appleton West High School



It started out as a good way to learn a new skill, earn high school credit, and make community connections. Instead, the eight at-risk sophomores – dubbed, the “After-School Breakfast Club” by supervisor Jake Larsh, an AmeriCorps member -- discovered camaraderie, support, and better grades in their venture to make, bake, and sell or donate 100 loaves of bread.

The students met every week last semester as part of Community Herbs, a curriculum-based program which engages struggling students in a student-led business enterprise. In cooperation with Goodwill Industries’ Community Garden Partnerships and the City of Appleton’s Neighborhood Revitalization Program, students learn to grow culinary herb products like basil, sage and parsley, then market and sell their herbs at community events. Along the way,

they discovered the joy of accomplishing something together.

“It was just such a rewarding experience to see the students excel and encourage one another,” Jake said. “These students come from all walks of life, but they

*“We all sat at a table and ate bread that was fresh from the oven. We were laughing and getting along. It was a great feeling. We sold a lot and the teachers and other people really enjoyed our bread. It was amazing...I never felt so proud.”—
Appleton West student*

formed a family.”

Students researched bread recipes they wanted to make, using herbs grown in the high school’s greenhouse, and would then have time to sit down and taste the bread. It was during the “bread breaking” sessions that friendships among the students blossomed, he said. “We began to talk not only about the bread making, but about family traditions, and our own lives.”

Students baked 100 loaves of bread in Appleton West’s kitchens during one long, 14-hour day, then sold the bread for \$5 a loaf – a price they decided upon – at a community play that evening. About 60 loaves were sold, and the rest were donated to local food pantries. Best sellers were focaccia and a braided bread, whose recipe came from one student’s grandmother. After paying for supplies, earnings from the bread sale were divided among the student entrepreneurs.

Jake tutors the students every morning before school and is inspired by how they help each other study. “They’re back in regular class now, but I still see them looking out for one another. Any subject they struggle with, they help each other. I’ve see them get on one another if someone’s slipping up because they all want to graduate together,” he said.

Resource for Tutors, Mentors

Tutoring, Mentoring, and Building Study Skills, an After School Training Toolkit, is available online at SEDL’s National Center for Quality Afterschool:

http://www.sedl.org/afterschool/toolkits/homework/pr_study_skills.html. Click on “View All Practices” for tutoring tips in math, science, and literacy.

National Days of Service

All Members must participate in one!

National Volunteer

Week: April 10-16
www.gysd.org

National & Global Youth Service Days: April 15-17

www.handsonnetwork.org/nationalprograms/

Earth Day: April 22
<http://www.earthday.net>

Join Hands Day: May 7
<http://joinhandsday.org/>

National Trails Day:
June 4

<http://www.backcountryattitude.com/national-trails-day.html>

**National Get Outdoors
Day:** June 11

<http://www.nationalgetoutdoorsday.org/>

How Are We Meeting Performance Measures?

Members in southern Wisconsin offer ideas, encouragement

Here's what AmeriCorps members from the lower half of the state talked about at their Regional Meeting March 2 in Johnson Creek. Their observations and ideas are shared here in the belief that AmeriCorps members learn best from each other. Can they help you?

Strategies to Recruit and Keep Volunteers

- Make personal contact with individuals and groups.
- Make the environment welcoming to volunteers.
- Be clear about expectations and duties of volunteers.
- Offer support for volunteers. Do they know where to go if they have questions or need help?
- Hold an orientation session for volunteers.
- Ask volunteers for feedback on how their experience went and how it could be improved.

Strategies for Successful Tutoring

- Communicate frequently with teachers and families about student progress.
- Be consistent. Be there when you say you will be. Have a daily plan laid out that the student can rely on.
- Be prepared. Have student assignments/folders ready to go. Know ahead of time what teachers want you to do.
- Monitor progress. Assess the student's skills, then be faithful about keeping the teacher informed about daily activities.
- Be resilient. Success takes time and happens in small steps. Refuse to take setbacks personally.
- Be a positive role model and give unmotivated students lots of positive attention.

Strategies for Successful Mentoring

In addition to many of the above, encourage
Be open and honest.

- Encourage and promote.
- Most importantly, listen to the student!



Examples of Community Service Projects (for SLL members)

- Donate gardening club produce.
- Help the local human society.
- Start a Girls on the Run program: www.girlsontherun.org.
- Build student relationships with senior citizens in a local care facility.

Examples of School Climate projects (for ESAG members)

- Convene a fathers' group with activities, parenting and health tips.
- Start Parent Buzz sessions for parents to talk, network, and find out more about school developments.
- Find ways to involve parents who can't get to school in children's learning
- Post a Community Hot Board near the school entrance for high school students to learn about jobs, community programs, and continuing education opportunities.

Life after AmeriCorps

Thinking of going to school when your AmeriCorps service ends? Finding a job? Continuing your service? An online tutorial from AmeriCorps offers an excellent, free way to plan your transition, assess your skills and accomplishments, and identify resources and strategies to take the next steps. The tutorial also prepares you to use your education award wisely. Take time to complete it at <http://encorps.nationalservice.org/whatsnext/index.shtml>



Service Stories due March 28!

What impact have you had on your community or vice versa? Get ideas at [DPI Service Stories](http://DPIServiceStories.org).



This newsletter is published monthly by the Department of Public Instruction. Direct questions or comments to:
Steve Kretzmann, AmeriCorps Project Manager, 608-267-9278 or 1-800-441-4563;

stephen.kretzmann@dpi.wi.gov

Betsy Prueter, AmeriCorps and VISTA Project Manager, 608-267-7290;

elizabeth.prueter@dpi.wi.gov

Jane Grinde, Director of Community Learning and Partnerships; 608-266-9356; jane.grinde@dpi.wi.gov

Laura Paella, Office Associate 608-264-9325; laura.paella@dpi.wi.gov

Ruth Anne Landsverk, Newsletter Editor; 608-266-9757;

ruthanne.landsverk@dpi.wi.gov

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, P. O. Box 7841, Madison, WI 53707-7841